

If I Stay - Gayle Forman

Study Guide

- Affectionate but Sorrowful, Nebulous yet Jubilant
(Amy Choi, Sarah Cho, Nathan Cho, Ji Yoon Hyun: E Block)

Key Facts

- **Title:** *If I Stay*
- **Author:** Gayle Forman
- **Genre:** Tragedy, Romantic Love Story
- **Date of publication:** 2009 (First published in the United States of America by Dutton Books, a member of Penguin Group)
- **Publisher:** Penguin Group (USA)
- **Narrator:** Mia
- **Point of View:** To continue the first-person, present-tense point of view introduced in the opening scene, the writer has Mia narrate the story in an unusual way.
- **Tone:** There are two tones in this novel, which depends on whether the story is focused on the past or the present. The past seems to be more pleasant and colorful because they focus on Mia's memories with her parents, relatives, friends, and her love shared with Adam. The present seems to have both the pleasant feeling but more of a tragic feeling at the same time because Mia loses her family and she is the only one alive, needing to make a decision of whether to stay and live or to leave and die.
- **Setting (time):** The past is during her junior and senior years of high school, while the present is divided by time (the whole book is divided by time, and in just 2 days the book ends), starts at 7:09 A.M. and ends at around 7:16 A.M. the next day.
- **Setting (place):** The past mostly focuses about her high school year and about her family in the house, while the present focuses more about the events that happen at the hospital Mia is staying, not the hospital down in her hometown but a small local place that looks more like an old-age home than a medical center.

- **Protagonist:** Mia is shown in two different ways: one as a spiritual soul who is not seen or heard by other people, and the other one as the actual, physical Mia who is lying on the hospital bed.
- **Major Conflict:** The major conflict in the story is Mia's decision of whether to stay and live in the world where she has no parents but just her relatives, or to follow along with her parents and her little brother, Teddy. In other words, she's running the show and is all up to her.
- **Rising Action:** At first she was happy to have her grandparents, her best friend, Kim, and Adam care for her. However, as soon as she finds out that her little brother, Teddy, died when she thought he wasn't, this brings her into a huge dilemma of not knowing what to do, not knowing the reason to live, and not being able to make decisions.
- **Climax:** The climax of the novel is the car accident of Mia and her family because that is what kills Mia's parents and her little brother, Teddy, and what puts Mia into a difficult situation where she is the one who needs to decide whether to leave or stay.
- **Falling Action:** The falling action is at the end of the story, when Mia hears Adam talk to her while she's in coma. This mainly includes Adam, who shows that the love she attains from him was so much more powerful than the loss that she had experienced. As Adam was the one mentioned throughout the whole book by Mia, it shows that her first and last true love was him. The greatest support would probably have been from him although the love that she experienced from the others were powerful and helpful as well.
- **Foreshadowing:** The weather setting in the beginning of the novel foreshadows the car accident that killed Mia's parents and Teddy, leaving Mia alone. Most of the other aspects that were foreshadowing any events had to do with music as well. Music genres of Adam's (rock) and Mia's (classic) foreshadows living and surviving; the last classical music Adam lets Mia listen to was *Andante con moto e poco rubato* by Yo-Yo Ma, which makes her 'stay.'

Plot Overview

The novel starts in a very calm, and usual life style of a teenage girl. Mia, the main character, is a cellist who relates her life to music continuously. She is neither the type of girl who likes to stand out in a crowd, nor the type of girl who spends her time in a solitary manner. She had a perfect life, in which she had a boyfriend, a best friend, and a loving family who loved her just the way she was. The main important event that happens in this novel actually happens in the beginning, which is a car accident. As her family got into a car accident, Mia was the only one left alive, and she figured there was no reason for her to stay alive. However, as she flashes back through her memories, she realized how the people who were left alive wanted to stay alive.

Mia and her family were going on a short drive to her grandparents' house on a snow day. The morning was usual just like any other days, and the least Mia expected was not being able to go to Portland to see her boyfriend, Adam. Unexpectedly, a car accident happened with a truck that was driving on the road. Her mother and father died at the accident scene, but she wasn't able to find her brother, Teddy. As she looked for him, the ambulance arrived, and she wasn't able to find him. At the hospital, she saw herself being operated. She was a ghost. Due to the frustration and confusion she had, she wanted to escape and see Adam. But she wasn't able to accomplish this idea because she was still alive, but simply unconscious. As a soul or a ghost, she watched herself from a third-perspective. She realized many things that she hadn't realized when she was alive, or before the accident happened. It was her first time seeing so many people come to see her, and she observed all and each of them. The most heartbreaking and sad part of this observation was the tears she had seen from some of the people she expected to cry the most. These people included her grandfather and Adam. Although Mia realized that her grandfather loved her and was proud of her, she didn't expect him to cry as if his eyes were a faucet. Mia was able to see things in a completely different perspective because

she started to realize that her life wasn't so miserable after all. She was receiving more love than she had expected herself to receive, and this triggered her to stay alive. Although she confused herself in rather to stay alive without her parents and brother, or to follow them to heaven. But as she remembered her memories and past she had with her family and those who were there supporting her, she felt even more confused. The lyrics her father had written gave her a negative view towards life, but at that time, Adam was there to support her. He told her, "Don't make me write a song." This showed how much he loved her because Adam never wrote a song that was about his girlfriend, but he was willing to do this for her. This idea gave Mia the idea that she should keep on living with the ones who are alive. Then, she woke up.

Although there is no real climax action that can be determined clearly, the car accident seems to be the climax. Even though this happened in the beginning of the novel, unlike most of the novels, this novel starts with the climax and continues on with the story using flashbacks. Without the car accident, nothing would have happened like it happened in the novel. These flashbacks used in the novel were used to show Mia's past and her experiences during that time. This usage of flashbacks mostly include the description of Mia's relationships with the people that she loved such as her boyfriend, her best friend, and her family. These memories trigger Mia to survive the hardship and come back alive since she constantly compares herself to the old times whenever she feels uneasy about living. At first, it seems that these thoughts only act as a catalyst for her death, but the power of support she received from other people overcame the past, and decided to live. Without the car accident, she wouldn't have realized the importance of love that she received and her identity.

There are many different scenes that acted as a trigger for Mia to stay alive. Such as, her encountering Adam at her high school. The music was a major connection that Gayle Forman, the author, made with the characters' lives. If it wasn't for music, Adam and Mia wouldn't have fallen in love with each other, and it was also clearly shown how music was the main factor that those two were related. Adam and Mia shared a different kind of interest in music, which was that Adam is a rock band guitarist, while Mia is a cellist. However, this key difference had been

overcome with their acceptance of who they were and what kind of interest they had. Another memory that she constantly brought up was her memories with her family. Her parents had been incredibly supportive with whatever she did. Including her love with Adam and her instrumental interest. Her parents were also musicians, thus they understood her better than anything. Lastly, her friendship with Kim was explained with great detail. Although Kim was not related with music, she became her best friend by fighting all the time. From these memories, Mia perceived that without her, the ones who are still alive will be miserable. Thus, they acted as a tool for her to stay alive rather than going to heaven with the rest of her family.

Since the climax happened in the beginning, the falling action was at the end when Mia heard Adam talk to her when she was in coma. As her memories closed up, and returned to reality towards the end of the novel, she heard Adam say that he will give up everything for her, and so did her friend, Kim. Due to this support that she received from her relationships, she felt that there was no reason for her to die because those people will be next to her the whole time. The falling action mainly included Adam, which showed that the love that she attained from him was more powerful than the loss that she had experienced. As Adam was the one mentioned by the end of the story, it showed that her first and last true love was him. The greatest support would probably have been from him although the love that she experienced from others were great.

The end of the novel is somewhat confusing for the readers to understand that Mia actually came back to life. The novel ends by saying, "Mia?" and this acted as the only clue that she came back alive and she was able to feel Adam holding her hand. Although the end is very vague, and leaves the readers with a question, what will she do from then, it closes up with a happy ending which is what most of the readers crave for. The main lesson that can be learned from this novel is that no matter how hard a situation can be, the love and support that are received by the victim can overcome the hardship. People should be able to relate this lesson to their lives because everyone experiences a downfall in their lives. This downfall can be a loss in a family, an end to a relationship, an unsuccessful life, or loss of identity. However, by relating

the lesson that Mia, the main character, taught the readers, they can overcome the hardship just like Mia did. Moreover, the choice that Mia made was a very hard choice that she had to make because it was about life or death. Not many people make this kind of choice, especially at a young age as Mia was. “Sometimes you make choices in life, and sometimes choices make you.” This quote that was introduced in the novel, can be finally understood towards the end of the novel when Mia made her choice just like her father did.

Character List

Mia:

Mia is the narrator, the main character of the book. Unlike both of her parents, she has brown eyes and brunette hair. She is not very outgoing, quite and serious most of the time. She played cello since she was in middle school and she can't live without it. She loves classical music, unlike her parents who loves different kinds of music such as rock musics. One day, her whole family gets into a car accident and both of her parents die including her little brother, Teddy. Mia herself is in a state of deep unconsciousness after the accident but is still spiritually alive through the novel.

Dad:

Mia's dad is a teacher in a middle school and teaches English as is job. He has blue eyes and blonde hair. He used to play in a rock band and loves music, however after he met Mia's mom and gets pregnant with Mia, he decides to quit the band and concentrate in his marriage and being a father. After Mia was born, he quit being all “rock and roll”, start to wear classic clothing such as bow tie. He smokes pipe, one of the important thing about him that Mia recalls while she is in coma: the smell of pipe tobacco, sweet and smoky which represents her dad.

Mom:

Mia's mom who is very energetic and outgoing most of the time. Because of her outgoing and cool personalities, she helps Mia a lot in relationship and problems with that she has with her boyfriend Adam. She has blue eyes and blonde hair which differs from Mia so much. She works as a travel agent in town and one day when she calls off her work for snow day and decides to go for a drive with her whole family, they gets into a serious car accident. She dies instantly from the accident.

Teddy:

Mia's little brother who has blond curly hair blue eyes just like their parents. He loves to play music, influenced by his dad, he starts to play guitar and drum. Teddy is very curious, outgoing and funny most of the time. Teddy and Mia, they were very close to each other before the accident happened. Also, Teddy is the one person who Mia really cares about and thinks that it is unfair for him to die so young because Mia is 10 years older than him.

Gramps:

Mia's grandfather, old and looks cold on the outside but who cares deeply about Mia even after the accident. He is the one who stays right besides her while Mia is in a coma. He knows that it is Mia's choice to die or stay but keeps telling her that him and all of the people who loves her wants her to stay. Also because it was not until right before the accident that they became close, he believes that there's so much more that he can do for her if she stays in the earth.

Gran:

She is Mia's grandmother who believes in angel and how angels are all around us, and they are the souls from the people who are dead, who chose not to leave the earth. She looks generous and has deep caring for others with warm heart. She was the one who informed Mia about going to music school, Julliard and who truly supported her in going to that school. They planned to go to the audition together but was too sick to go.

Adam:

Mia's boyfriend who plays in a rock band, Shooting Star. He loves music and appreciate them in many ways. He plays guitar, drum and sings as a main vocalist for his band. He is skinny, tall and has the style of "Rock star", wearing skinny pants with messy hair do. He is one of the important people in Mia's life because he supports her and gives her strength in a lot of ways, especially in music.

Kim:

Mia's best friend who plays an important role in Mia's life. She is serious most of the time like Mia, and has a lot of common personalities with Mia, which is one of the reason why they became best friends. Kim has dark long hair and she is Jewish, raised in a strict family. However, she is still out spoken and straight forward when it comes to her opinion. She helps Mia a lot when she has problem with insecureness of herself, especially when Mia was uncertain in continue to playing cello.

Henry:

One of Mia's parent's music friends who used to play in the same band as Mia's dad. He was the one who opposed in Mia's dad quitting the band and stop playing music. However Henry never quit playing music. All though there isn't any specific physical appearance described in the book, he dresses punk rock and has the look of someone who might be seem wasted.

Willow:

Willow is Henry's wife who works as a nurse. She feels responsible for Mia's family's death, so she takes care of Teddy after the accident until he dies, and later takes care of Mia while she is in coma. All though it doesn't specifically state in the novel Willow's physical appearance, she is someone who makes people calm with her warm heart, which also changes her husband, Henry in a lot of ways.

Kerry Gifford:

A famous musician in town, who is also one of Mia's parent's good old music friend who died few years ago. He was outgoing, spontaneous and had great passion for music. He was in three different bands and earned money by playing in local clubs. He stayed single even after Mia's dad and Henry got married and had kids. He was devoted in playing music, wore rock band style all the time. Kerry is one of the important character because his funeral is the first funeral that Mia has ever been to. This leads to her to remember him and his funeral when it comes to her in deciding her own death.

Major Character Analysis

Mia:

Mia is 17 years old and she is a senior in high school. She plays cello and applies to Julliard, the music school. Her passion for music, especially classical music is profound. Unlike her parents who loves rock music, she has a unique preference in music. Because of this difference from herself and her family, she tries to quit cello several times. However, she knows that cello is something that really connects her in a lot of ways: music, passion, strength and talent. She realizes that she cannot live without playing cello because it's such a big part of her life and something that makes herself who she is. Through out the novel, Mia feels out of the box most of the time, including the difference personalities and characteristics in her family. Both of her parent have blue eyes and blonde hair, but Mia has brown eyes and brunette hair. Her parents are outgoing, fun and spontaneous, but on the other hand, Mia is quite and serious most of the time. After the accident, she gets into a coma, unconscious but her soul is still alive on the earth. As her soul watches over all the events that are going on in the ICU room and the hospital, she realizes that it is her choice to make whether she is going to stay or die. She gets confused

and chaotic in making this decision because her parents and Teddy are dead, which makes her as lonely as she has ever been. She wants to leave the hospital and go to where her parents are. But she knows that there are still her loved ones including Gramps, Adam and Kim, who are deeply sadden and waiting for her to wake up.

Adam:

Adam is one of the main character who plays an important role in Mia's life and the novel itself. He is Mia's boyfriend who is in a rock band named "Shooting Star". His love for music is passionate and very diverse. He appreciates all kinds of music including what Mia does, Classical music. The fact that he appreciated other genre of music, connects him and Mia in a lot of ways. They both tries to understand each other's preference in music. Adam is a typical rock star style of guy who wears skinny pants, printed rock band t-shirts with messy hair. He is witty, fun to be with but can be serious when he needs to be. He gets very emotional when he finds out that Mia got into a car accident, but acts in a calm way which shows us that he is also very mature. While Mia is in coma, he understands her that she feels alone and tries to be with her even though he is not allowed to be with her all the time. He feels responsible because both of her parents cannot be with her anymore. He is loving and deeply caring to Mia and tries to understand her in any possible way.

Important Quotations

1. "*Sometimes you make choices in life and sometimes choices make you.*" -pg.192

Analysis:

This passage is when Mia flashes back to the time when her dad was still alive. Mia talks about how her dad also had to make a choice between keep on playing for the rock band or quitting the band for his family. Even though he loved playing in the band and it was a big part

of his life, he gave up playing in the band to support his family. This truly connects to the part where Mia is having a hard time making a decision: Should she stay or leave? and this quote shows us that in most of the cases, people have to make choices for themselves. It is not easy sometimes because people usually have to give up something when making choices. By her father saying this quote shows Mia that life is all about making choices, and from times, the choices chooses yourself, which also impacts her in making her final choice.

2. *“I’m only ten years older than him, but it’s like I’ve already had so much more life. It is unfair. if one of us should have been left behind, if one of us should be given the opportunity for more life, it should be him.” - pg.160*

Analysis:

This quote is something that Mia says to herself, when she finds out that Teddy is gone along with her parents. The point where she finds out about Teddy’s death is an important part of the novel because it impacts her a lot in her making decision. She feels lonely as she has been ever before, the fact that Teddy, her little brother is dead makes her feel alone. She feels sorry and guilty about the fact that she is the only one alive especially for Teddy because he is ten years younger than him. Mia thinks that it is unfair. She thinks to herself if one of them, Teddy and herself, should be given the opportunity for more life, it should be Teddy. After this, her decision in staying or leaving leans more towards to “leaving” the earth side.

3. *“So I can show her that I’m here. That someone’s still here.” -pg.125*

Analysis:

This part of the passage is when Adam and Kim gets kicked out of the ICU from an old nurse. However, Adam tries to find a way to get into the ICU to see Mia even though he is not allowed to be in there. When Kim asks Adam why he wants to go into the ICU so bad when he can be there for only few seconds, Adam says that he just wants Mia to know that he is here and to acknowledge her that he came to see her even just for a few second. This quote that Adam

says to Kim shows that he understands Mia, how she feels alone in the hospital without her mom, dad or Teddy. *“So I can show her that I’m here. That someone’s still here.”* Adam knows that Mia needs someone to be with her by her side. But by letting her know that Adam, himself is here for her will make her feel better. It seems like Adam knows what Mia is going through even though she is still in coma, not able to tell him her feelings words to words.

4. *“And I suddenly I just need to hold his hand more than I’ve ever needed anything in this world.”-pg. 234*

Analysis:

This quote is when Mia suddenly feels that she really needs to stay. She never thought that she “needed” to stay before but this time when she feels the strong love from her surroundings, she firmly believes that she needs to stay. When she says that she suddenly needs to hold “his” hand, this indicates to Adam, which shows us that the person who changed her mind most greatly was Adam. Since both of her parents and Teddy died, she feels lonely and left behind but Adam was the one that she could live for. This shows us how the power of love can change one’s important decision, like Mia’s final decision.

5. *“There are like twenty people in that waiting room right now. Some of them are related to you. Some of them are not. But we’re all your family.” -pg. 220*

Analysis:

This quote is what Kim says to Mia while she visits the ICU room to talk to Mia like a normal person as she was before. Kim says that there are a lot of people, who truly cares about her in the waiting room, waiting for Mia to come back. Regardless who they are, related as family or not related to Mia, they loved her and waited for her. This passage shows us the power of love that surrounds Mia while she is still in coma. Even though Mia’s family is gone, the fact that there are still people who loves her and think of her as their family, makes Mia feel different. This quote made her realize that there is reason to live. To stay in this world.

Themes and Symbols

First theme: The Power of Love

The power of love is one of the major themes that occurs throughout the novel. In this novel, It is amazing and beautiful to see how love can motivate a person to do things that other people cannot ever imagine doing. Mia's boyfriend, Adam, tries to visit his girlfriend, Mia, who is in the state of unconsciousness, comma, lying on the bed at ICU, trauma intensive care-unit, room. However, nurses and workers at the hospital do not permit Adam to go in the room and visit Mia. They think that Adam is a stranger. Then, Adam tries to make a plan that will distract nurses and workers from catching him.

"We need to go upstairs to the ICU and then maybe someone could shout that Brooke Vega is here. That might do it. If it doesn't, then sing. All we really want is to lure a couple of curious nurses out, and that grouchy head nurse after them. Once she comes out of the ICU and sees all of us in the hall, she'll be too busy dealing with us to notice that Adam has slipped inside" (page 140 and paragraph 4).

In this passage, Adam decides to distract nurses and workers of hospital using Brooke Vega, who is a famous punk singer, so that he can get into ICU room and meet Mia without interruption from nurses and workers. So, Adam requests a famous punk singer for help. This brilliant idea was able to come up in Adam's mind because he was crazily in love with Mia. It is amazing to see how he does not give up on meeting Mia because of his love and passion towards Mia. His love towards Mia gave him courage to even ask a well-known punk singer for help so that he can meet his lover, Mia.

Moreover, at the end of this book, another amazing incidence happens through love from other people. After long struggle with deciding whether she should die or stay, Mia finally

decides to wake herself up from comma and live rest of her life even though all members of her family are dead from car accident.

“I summon all the love I have ever felt, I summon all the strength that Gran and Grams and Kim and the nurses and Willow have and Teddy would fill me with if they could” (page 324 and paragraph 1).

In this passage, Mia is in the process of waking herself up from unconsciousness. During the process, Mia summons all the love, care, and pray she received from other people to motivate and strengthen herself to wake herself up from comma for the people who desperately wants her back and show their love and care toward her. Eventually, at the end, she succeeds in waking herself up from comma by the power of love from other people.

Second Theme: Difficulty of Making Choice

Difficulty of making choice is one of the major themes that occurs throughout the novel. In this novel, Mia, the main character, struggled for long time with making decision mainly for two issues that she encountered. One issue was about deciding whether she should give up going to Juilliard, which was far away from where she was, so that she can be with her boyfriend Adam or not. The other issue was about deciding whether she should die or live.

Mia loved classic music. Also, she loved to play cello. Classic music and cello was her passion. Her dream is to go to Juilliard which would be like winning a lottery for Mia if she gets acceptance from Juilliard. However, at the same time, she could not give up her boyfriend. She loved her boyfriend, Adam, as much as she loved playing cello. So, Cello and Adam were both of her passion and love.

“A small part of me felt like even applying was some kind of betrayal. Juilliard was in New York. Adam was here” (page 48 and paragraph 2).

Mia had to choose between Adam and Juilliard. However, for Mia, going to Juilliard did not mean she would break up with Adam and not meet or talk to Adam forever. Nevertheless, Mia felt that it would be betrayal to Adam if she decided to go to Juilliard, which literally meant that she chose music love over Adam love. Also, she knew that it would be extremely painful for Adam to be far apart from each other. Nonetheless, Mia did not want it to turn down Juilliard if she gets accepted because it is her dream school that is really hard to go in and she loved music. As a result, Mia went through difficulty of making choice about her future whether she should choose Adam love or music love.

During Mia was in the state of unconsciousness, she realized that she was the one who has to make a decision whether she is going to die or not. Then, Mia started to struggle with making a decision almost until the end of the novel.

“I am still not entirely clear on the particulars here, but I do know that once I fully commit to going, I’ll go. But I’m not ready, Not yet. I don’t know why, but I’m not. And I’m little scared that if I accidentally think, I wouldn’t mind an endless nap, it will happen and be irreversible” (page 179 and paragraph 2).

From this passage, readers can notice that once Mia was not ready to make a decision yet because she was afraid of future that would happen after she choose to die or live. Also, she was afraid that she would regret for the decision that she made. If Mia had a chance to reverse the decision she made after she regret, Mia would have just picked any choice. So, Mia was struggling with choosing because she had doubt, fear, and questions about the future, after-death, and reaction from her dead parents. Everything was uncertain for her. Also, it was not only about uncertainty, but also it was about her family. Mia lost all members of her family. Losing family or people who she loved the most and loved Mia the most gave Mia no purpose of living because she was solitary. However, there were still different kind of family hoping, praying, caring, loving, supporting, and wanting Mia like what she received from her true family. There were about twenty of them: relatives, cousins, grandparents, friends, boyfriend, and other

people who are unrelated to her. From all of them, there were also some people, her boyfriend Adam and her friend Kim, who she loved. So, Mia could not decide it to die because it was not like she completely lost of her family. Also, Mia could not decide it to die because there were still people wanting her like her parents. Therefore, it was hard for Mia to make a decision whether she should choose to die or live.

First Symbol: Music

In this novel, music symbolizes commonness that exist between people. Furthermore, this commonness, which is a music, amazingly and interestingly cause people to support and love each other. All members of her family were fan of rock music, except for Mia. Mia was only fan of classical music among her family. Furthermore, she was the only one who has different physical characteristics, such as different color of hair and eyes, among her family so Mia often felt isolation among her family. However, out of those isolation, there was a music, which was the only commonness that existed among Mia's family. All members of her family appreciated and loved music.

"But in my family, playing music was still more important than the type of music you played, so when after a few months it became clear that my love for the cello was no passing crush, my parents rented me one so I could practice at home" (page 23 and paragraph 1).

From this passage, we can notice that, although they liked different types of music, passion for music and loving music was the only commonness that existed among Mia's family. Even though Mia and her family liked contrasting type of music, classic and rock, Mia's parents still appreciated and respected classical music by supporting Mia to pursue her passion for classical music, which led Mia to realize that cello was her passion and instrument.

Moreover, music played important role in relationship between Adam, Mia's boyfriend, and Mia. Here, music also symbolize commonness because they both love music. Adam, similarly to Mia's family, loved punk/rock music and played guitar like Mia's father and little

brother, Teddy. However, Adam still appreciated and respected Mia's passion and love towards classical music and cello like what Mia's family did to Mia.

"You were both in love with music and then you fell in love with each other" (page 210 and paragraph 2)

From this passage, readers can realize that Adam and Mia started to get closer and, later, fall in love with each other by the commonness, which is a music, that exist between them. If there was no music and if Mia and Adam did not like music, there wouldn't be no commonness that led them to fall in love each other.

Second Symbol: Cello

In this novel, cello represents isolation and unity. Mia loves classical music, and she loves to play cello. However, Mia has serious concern about her distinctive passion towards cello and classical music among her family and boyfriend.

"The same niggling doubts I always had about not belonging. I didn't feel like I belonged about not belonging, I didn't feel like I belonged with my family, and now I didn't feel like I belonged with Adam" (page 93 and paragraph 1).

Her passion towards cello and classical music make herself feel isolated because she is the only one who loves to play cello and listens to classical music among her family. Contrary from the musical taste of Mia, all members of Mia's family and, even, her boyfriend Adam love rock/punk music. Mia cannot often understand the rock/punk culture. Also, she does not like to go to Shooting Star, Adam's band, concert because she feels uncomfortable. As a result, Mia feels isolated from her family and boyfriend.

Cello not only represents isolation, but also represents harmony or amity. In the novel, Mia had this perception that cello does not match with guitar at all. So, she thought that it sounds awful to play cello with guitar although she never tried it before. One day, when Adam

was with her family playing guitar with Mia's dad, her dad suggested Mia to jam with them with her cello. At first, she reluctantly refused her dad's request. However, later, she joined them jamming.

"So I played. And even though you wouldn't think it, the cello didn't sound half bad with all those guitars. In fact, it sounded pretty amazing" (page 227 and paragraph 3).

After she jammed with Adam and her dad with her cello, she changed her opinion about cello and guitar. She was amazed by harmonic sounds that amazingly came out from both instruments, cello and guitar. This was the first time she has ever felt integrated with her family and boyfriend through playing music together with their own instruments.

Chapter Summaries

Pages 3~40

On an ordinary day, Mia and her family finds out that it's a snow day (and they all get a day off of what they do) and decides to go out to visit their friend Henry and Willow, since there wouldn't be traffic problems. On their way, Mia and her family gets into a car accident and both of her parents die. She figures out that she doesn't have the power to move her own body but just simply see as a spiritual soul that she wasn't dead, but was in terrible condition. Before all the emergency cars come, she still can't find her little brother, Teddy. Mia is a senior at a high school in Oregon and to her family, playing some kind of musical instrument and having relations with music is very important. This is one reason why Mia loves music so much and is motivated to play the cello. Teddy is a young little brother of Mia's, energetic, bright, and playful. Then one day, Mia's family finds out on the radio that it was a snow day. Mia and Teddy didn't have to go to school, Mia's dad didn't have to work since he's an English teacher, and Mia's mom just decides to cancel her work as a travel agent and stay with the family. Again,

while they were driving to Henry and Willow's house, they decide to listen to Mia's favorite classical piece, Beethoven's Cello Sonata No. 3. Everything then happened just in a snap. Beethoven's Cello Sonata No. 3 was still playing while Mia realized that her parents were dead, that she was alive but was in danger, and that she was a soul who nobody else could see or hear. As she is in the ambulance car ready to go through surgery, her memories come back to her like a film; memories about her dad, mom, her experience in her first cello concert, her best friend Kim, and lastly, her boyfriend Adam who seems to be a big part of Mia.

Pages 40~75

Mia is in hospital, going through some intense surgeries after her body was moved to ICU, trauma intensive-care unit. In other words, she is in the state of deep unconsciousness, coma. Mia is befuddled by all the surgeries and talks between the doctors. Along with that, she is confused with her identity because she is spiritually alive, but she can't find any other companions who are in the same status as her. She starts to then wander around the hospital corridor and finds her grandparents. From here on, she starts flashing back to her memories (the flashbacks are important parts in the novel). She remembers how Gran suggested her to apply to Julliard and supported Mia the most. However, this puts her in a dilemma because she knows that her applying to Julliard will cause problems with her boyfriend, Adam. However, she eventually gets an invitation card to take an audition at New York, which becomes one of her greatest achievements for her coming and maybe not for Adam. When Mia's narration comes back to the present, she realizes that her body is in grave condition which she doesn't know what it means, but predicts that she's almost in the stage before death. While her grandparents are there for Mia, she really wonders where Kim and Adam is, if they found out about her or not. Then starts her flashback again about her love stories with Adam and how much hate Mia and Kim had to one another, but built up their strong friendship, not being able to separate. Regardless of those memories, she just wanted one thing. Mia wanted to see Adam.

Pages 75~116

The past goes into more beautiful and clear experiences and memories of Mia getting to know Adam a bit more, getting used to his punk life and him respecting hers, getting closer and more attached to Kim, and getting closer to Mia's mom who lets the reader learn about who Mia's mom is like and her personality. But the present is a bit more intense and serious in these pages compared to other pages previously and this is because relatives are now allowed to visit Mia, which in some ways puts Mia in a huge dilemma of whether to stay and live her life or to follow the road her parents and Teddy took. The first event that might be important (one of the flashbacks of the pages) was when Gran and Gramps was finally able to visit Mia right after her surgery. This event was important because not only has it helped Mia in a way, but also it was a serious conflict for Mia since it gave her the dilemma of whether to live or die. She was finding out that she, herself was running the show. Another event that happens is the story was about her parents having Mia and that they tried so much but failed, which is why Mia was so precious and well taken care of when she came out (out of no where without any pre-notice). The story also talked about how Mia's dad cried so much when he first saw Mia because he was so glad he finally had a daughter and realized that life was precious. After that the setting moved to Halloween. Adam dressed up as Mozart and Mia dresses up as a rocker girl. However, Mia finds out that Adam loved her so much, whoever she was, whoever she tried to act like, and was in love with her yesterday, today, and of course will be in love with her tomorrow as well. She felt so secure about this. Mia is now back to the present where Adam finally found out about Mia's accident and came to the hospital. However, he's not allowed to go in because he wasn't a part of the "immediate family." Then goes on the struggle of Adam and his ideas of how to sneak in to go see her love, Mia, with some help from Kim.

Pages 117~159

In this section of the novel, Adam arrives to the hospital with the help of Kim. However, when he tries to enter the ICU, the oldest nurse stops him from doing so, and Kim and Adam goes to find another way to get in. The conflict was for Adam and Mia to meet since they haven't met after the car accident. But there were so many obstacles Adam had to cross in order to get to Mia. As Adam and Kim walks out of the ICU, Mia finds herself stiff inside the ICU room unable to follow them. Then when they fully disappear in front of her eyes, she is able to move and decides to go to the cafeteria to find Adam, Kim, and her family members. Later she finds Adam and Kim opening each and every locker room in order to come up with a plan. Kim and Adam's plan was to dress up like a doctor and enter the ICU. However, they weren't able to find any clothes or any accessories to disguise themselves. Then suddenly, Adam decides to call his band mates to help him and calls this plan the "Bat Signal." The story then moves on to the flashback when Mia was in middle school. She talks about the struggle she had with becoming a cellist. When she lost fun in playing the cello, she wanted to start over her life in high school without being called the cellist. But Kim noticed this faster than Mia's family, and gave her a CD of a rock band with a cellist playing along. This inspired Mia in a way that she had never experienced. She discovers how a cello can be so different from what she used to play. Then one day, when Kim comes over to her house to eat dinner, Kim brought up the topic of going to a music summer camp. Mia was more than happy to attend it, simply because she wanted to keep the feeling of the new cello sound. When she arrived to the camp, she had a hard time adjusting to the camp environment and making friends, but Simon, came up to her questioning her musical talents, and starts making friends. Simon also plays the cello and wanted Mia to compete with him. As Mia adjusts to the summer camp, she learns that when more people perform together, there is a completely different sound that can be heard. Then, she returns back to the hospital where Brooke Vega comes to create a distraction in the hospital. She started singing while Adam tried to go into the ICU to see Mia. However, when he was almost about to touch her, he gets pulled away by two guards and was ordered to take him to a different

guarding room. Down at the lobby, he meets Willow, a friend of Mia's mom, and she takes care of Adam and Kim. However, what Mia noticed was that if Teddy was alive, she wouldn't be in the hospital Mia is at, but the fact that she was at Mia's place proved to Mia that Teddy had died. Another flashback, to Teddy's birth. Willow's husband, Henry, came to Mia when Teddy was about to be born and told her that her dad cried when she was born. However, the most important thing that was mentioned was that Willow changed her current-husband's life the most. Her husband was addicted to drinking and although many girls failed to settle him down, they always failed except for Willow. Mia expressed that Willow was the most bravest and kindest person she has ever met, someone who will not take "no" for an answer.

Pages 159~192

The main conflict of this section of the book is simply Mia wanting to leave. When she finds out that Teddy is dead, she feels so lonely and left out without anyone but just her relatives. This leads to her dilemma in deciding whether she should stay or leave. Teddy's death gives a great impact to Mia because she had loads of sweet memories with Teddy. How he would love listening to Harry Potter books only if Mia read it for him, how Mia loved to nuzzle her face into his blond curly hair, and how Teddy would only fall asleep when Mia played a lullaby with her cello. But these memories just makes her feel that life is unfair. She wonders why she had to be the one left behind, why she was given the opportunity to live when Teddy is the young one to experience so many things more in life. As she continues to look for Teddy, she comes back to the ICU and thinks to herself that there is no specific reason for her to stay alive anymore. Her parents both are gone along with Teddy. She feels like she doesn't belong in the world without her family. This leads her physical body to suddenly worsen, blood vessels starting to leak. While the doctors take Mia to another surgery, she flashbacks back to her great-aunt Flo's funeral, Peter Hellman's funeral at her music camp, and her parent's friend Kerry Gifford's funeral. While she goes to these funerals, she finds out that she might find it comfortable and better to go along with where her parents and Teddy decided to go. Mia feels that it may be true for someone

not being able to control their own funeral, but that sometimes they can get to choose their own death. Even though she wants to follow her family, so no one left behind, she can't stop thinking that her Mom would not be happy about the way events are unfolding currently.

Pages 193~234

Mia realizes that she is the one to decide whether she is going to die or not, and that she is running the show. Even though she knows her grandparents, her relatives, Kim, and Adam cares and loves her so much desiring her to stay, she still doesn't know or doesn't want to feel the loneliness of what life would be like without her family. While she keeps on thinking, Willow convinces nurse Ramirez to allow Adam to go into the ICU room. Then finally, Adam gets to see Mia lying on her back with no consciousness. Then, Mia goes back to past talking about one of the major conflict she faced with Adam. Their relationship worsened because of Mia's uncertain future career. Mia lied to her boyfriend many times that she does not have time to meet him due to extreme difficulty she was having from cello lessons and practices. But she lied to him that she cannot meet him most of the time because she needed to pour her time on practicing cello since she was actually preparing for Juilliard audition. After Adam realized that Mia was trying to go to Juilliard, he starts to worry because if Mia gets an acceptance from Juilliard, they would have to be far apart from each other and might have to break up. Also, after Adam entered college, his band started to get more famous and more busy because dealing with record companies, recording music, and emerging concerts was not easy. As a result, Mia and Adam didn't have much time to meet and talk. But when they try to talk this out, it was their first time worrying about their future. Then Mia starts to wonder how it would feel if one were dead. Mia then questions herself if dead people remember things that what he or she did when they were alive. Mia wishes to have memories with Kim and Adam after she dies. Then, she starts to wonder how other people would feel if she dies. Even though she cannot feel their pain, Mia already knows that if people lose her or if Mia chooses to die, her death would hurt other people; it would be heartbreaking for them to lose their precious person. Kim then starts to desperately

encourage and wishes Mia to stay. She mentions that twenty people, who are related or not related to Mia, visited Mia wishing and praying for her to live. Still in dilemma, Mia desperately wants to see Adam. When he arrives, he talks to Mia that he will do everything for her just if she decides to stay. Then, Adam plugs earphones into Mia's ears with a cello music of Yo-Yo Ma. As she listens to the music, she flashes through all the past memories of her life. She starts to feel things that she couldn't do before. Then, she tries to wake up by summoning all the love, encouragement, and prayers from other people who love her. Finally, Mia feels Adam's grip tighten, and finally comes back to stay.

Chapter Study Questions

Pages 3~40

1. Mia's father loves rock music unlike his daughter who loves classical music. However, he is willing to give up his passion, a rock music, just for his child, Mia. Is Mia's dad's abandonment of a rock music sacrifice or choice?

I think the action that Mia's father took for Mia was sacrifice. The reason is because normally men becomes more mature in terms of handling life and realize the reality of life through having children. Also, it is hard to give up on passion without the sense that you are doing for someone.

2. Mia and Adam are in love relationship although they both have very different musical interests (Mia loves classical music and plays the cello, Adam plays in a rock band and plays guitar) but still found each other attractive. What draws them together?

I think that their passion towards music draws them together. Although they have different taste for type of music, their love towards the music itself, not type of music, draws them together.

3. Mia is struggling with the choice wanting to die and wanting to live. What effect does Gramps's visit have on Mia's life?

After Gramps's visit, Mia's life becomes happier. Gramps was the only one who respected Mia's decision about if she wants to die or live. So, she is happy that there is someone who finally understands her.

Pages 40-75

1. Why does Mia talk about going to Hawaii and on vacations while she watches herself being operated?

I think Mia talked about going to Hawaii and on vacations while she watches herself being operated because she was imagining herself having ghost ability, such as telekinetic ability. May be, she was wishing to have ghost ability like moving through walls.

2. Why do you think Mia cared about what kind of music was played during the operation on her body?

I think Mia cared about what kind of music was played during the operation because she felt like doctors were having same struggle as her family do: arguing over type of music they want listen to. Furthermore, she cared about it because it was not only her family problem, but also common problem that occurs among other people too, which means her family is not different, but just same as other people.

3. Why do you think Mia flashes back to when she went on a Julliard audition with her grandfather? What is the significance of this scene for Mia?

Mia flashes back to when she went to Juilliard audition with her grandfather because this was when her relationship with grandfather got closer for the first time in her life. Mia always used to feel awkward with her grandfather. However, after she got a ride from grandfather, they become closer and comfortable.

Pages 75-116

1. Why do you think Gramps mentions about the angel when he is talking about Mia's decision?

I think Gramps mentions about the angel because he believes that angels decide whether Mia is going to die or live. Also, Gramps suddenly mentions about the angel because his wife, Gran, believes in angel and sees angels, which largely influenced him.

2. What does it mean when Gran said that "It doesn't work like that," after Gramps mentions about the angel deciding Mia's decision?

I think Gran meant the opposite of Gramps's belief, which he believed that angels will take away her life if they want to. May be, Gran meant that angels would give freedom to Mia so that she can make a choice by herself.

3. Why do you think Mia had struggled so much to fit in with Adam's group?

I think Mia had struggled so much to fit in with Adam's group because they have contrasting taste for type of music, rock and classical music. Mia struggles to fit in with Adam's group because she loves classical music and she does not like to go to rock concert or join rock culture, which is good for Adam.

Pages 117~159

1. Why is Mia going through such struggle and difficulty in choosing whether she should die or live?

She is going through such struggle and difficulty because she lost her family, who she loves the most. On the opposite, there are other people, such as her boyfriend Adam and best-friend Kim, who Mia loves and also loves her. In other words, there people who are wanting her to live, and few of them are who Mia loves.

2. Why does Adam only need seconds to meet Mia? What is the meaning behind the short amount of time?

Adam only needs seconds to meet Mia because he just want let Mia to know that he was there for her when she desperately needed him. Adam wanted Mia to feel his presence. The short amount of time represents Adam's presence that supports and cares Mia.

3. Why does Kim not allow Mia to quit cello, and act as if she is forcing Mia to quit cello, even though it is not a concern that she should be contemplating with such serious and sensitivity?

Kim is taking seriously because Mia is her bestfriend. Kim could not allow Mia to quit cello because she knew how much Mia loved playing cello. Also, I think Kim thought that Mia's feeling was just a just contemporary feeling that occurs often.

Pages 159~192

1. When Gran leaves, Mia realizes that Gramps was still there fore her, crying to tell her that it is up to her to decide what to do with her life but that he wishes her to live. How does Mia react to this situation and how does it affect her emotion?

Mia has been depressed and lonely because she lost her family and there was no one who understood her situation that she was the one who has to make a decision whether she is going to die or live. However, for the first time, a person who truly understands what Mia is going through appears, who is her grandfather. Mia feels grateful and happy that Gramps is supporting her decision whatever choice she makes.

2. Why does Mia suddenly mentions about the song “Waiting for Vengeance” written by her dad?

Mia talks about the song “Waiting for Vengeance” because the lyrics similar to the situation what she is going through. Mia feels that Dad wrote the song as if he knew that she is going to be the one who is going to make a decision whether she should die or live.

3. How do you think it was possible for Mia’s father to transform his life and himself into totally other person?

I think that Mia’s father became aware of the seriousness of life and family after he got children. He became more mature in terms of acting as father to their children. Also, Mia’s father was inspired by Mia’s grandfather because Mia’s grandfather was a great father to Mia’s mom.

Pages 193 ~ 234

1. Why does Kim emphasize about twenty people, who visited Mia, to Mia? What is the significance of twenty people?

Kim emphasizes about the existence of twenty people because she wants to keep Mia stay alive. Also, Kim starts to realize that Mia needs family who supports, loves, and care about her even though it is not her true family. Twenty people signifies Mia’s second family, who loves, supports, and does care about Mia just like true family.

2. Why do you think Adam writes a song for girlfriend only when something tragic happens to his girlfriend?

I think Adam writes a song for girlfriend only when something tragic happens to his girlfriend because he wants to relieve the distress or sorrow by singing a his song. Also, may be, Adam wants to support his girlfriend in midst of distress and sorrow.

3. Why do you think Mia flashes back to past memories in the process of waking herself up?

I think Mia flashes back to past memories because she chose twenty people, instead of her true family who is dead already. Flashing back to past memories, which Mia spent with her true family, means that Mia is longing for the presence of her dead true family even though she chose to not die with them as a true unit or family.

Unit Test

True or False

1. Mia plays the guitar. (T/F)
2. Her father and mother are against Mia playing any instruments. (T/F)
3. Although Teddy is naive kid, but Mia still loves him the way he is. (T/F)
4. None of Mia's family members came to the hospital to see how she was doing. (T/F)
5. Mia doesn't know whether or not she should live or die after she goes into coma. (T/F)

Complete the following sentences.

6. On the day when Mia's family had the car accident, she was suppose to go to _____ to see her boyfriend's band play.
7. "Sometimes you make _____ in life, and sometimes choices make you."
8. The _____ broke when she thought of death.
9. Adam brought _____ to the hospital to get into the ICU.
10. Mia realized about Teddy's death when she saw _____ at the hospital.

Circle the correct answer (Multiple Choice).

11. After the car accident Mia is:

- a. Perfectly fine
- b. Dead
- c. Severely hurt
- d. Severely hurt and unconscious

12. Mia likes to play the

- a. Guitar
- b. Cello
- c. Trumpet
- d. Drum

13. Mia's boyfriend is a

- a. Rock band guitarist
- b. Cellist
- c. Singer
- d. Drummer

14. Willow and _____ are married.

- a. Gramps
- b. Simon
- c. Henry
- d. Adam

15. With Kim's help, Mia went to a music summer camp and ...

- a. Realized the fun of performing with other musicians.
- b. Realized that she didn't like to play the cello with other musicians.
- c. Fell in love with Simon.

d. Wanted to go home.

16. Mia's father became a _____ rather than staying in the band.

a. cellist

b. actor

c. stay-home dad

d. English teacher

17. Mia's mother didn't want her father to _____.

a. play in the band

b. stay home the whole time

c. quit the band because of her and her family

d. take care of the children

18. Who was involved in the car accident?

a. Adam and Mia

b. Mia, her father, her mother, and Teddy

c. Mia, her grandparents, and her parents

d. Kim and Mia

19. At _____'s funeral, Mia's parents had a debate on choosing their death.

a. Kerry

b. Willow

c. Henry

d. Gramps

20. In the summer, Simon and Mia competed with each other. Who won the competition?

- a. Simon
- b. Neither of them.
- c. Simon and Mia
- d. Mia

21. Mia's mother said, _____ are such boys.

- a. Girls
- b. They
- c. Men
- d. Henry and Adam

22. Henry told Mia that her father _____ when she was born.

- a. laughed
- b. screamed
- c. cried
- d. was neutral

23. When Teddy was born,

- a. Mia's dad was neutral.
- b. Mia's dad was too scared to handle him, so Mia volunteered to cut the umbilical cord.
- c. Henry held the baby first.
- d. Mia's mother didn't let anyone to come in.

24. When Mia is in surgery for the first time, she hears the doctors talk about:

- a. What music they should play when doing the surgery.
- b. How they should save her life.
- c. What she looks like right now.

d. If she will die or not.

25. When Mia is unconscious, what does Kim tell her?

a. "I'm still here for you."

b. "You still have a family."

c. "You can go if you want."

d. "Do what you want."

Short Answer.

26. How does Mia and her family get into a car accident?

27. Why does Mia think that her relationship with Adam is not quite working in the beginning?

28. When and how does Mia realize the warmth of Gramps towards her?

29. Does Mia want to die when she is in the ICU? Why or why not?

30. What does Mia think about life and death when she remembers the lyrics her father wrote?

Essay Questions.

31. What do you think would have happened if Mia and her family hadn't gone on a trip?

32. How does music tie in with people's lives?

33. What do you think the choices that Mia's father made is similar to everyone's lives?

34. How do you explain Mia's sick body and the thought processing about death?

35. Do you think the title should be changed into "If I Leave"? Why or why not?

Answer Key for the Unit Test

True or False

1. Mia plays the guitar. (T/F)
2. Her father and mother are against Mia playing any instruments. (T/F)
3. Although Teddy is naive kid, but Mia still loves him the way he is. (T/F)
4. None of Mia's family members came to the hospital to see how she was doing. (T/F)
5. Mia doesn't know whether or not she should live or die after she goes into coma. (T/F)

Complete the following sentences.

6. On the day when Mia's family had the car accident, she was suppose to go to **Portland** to see her boyfriend's band play.
7. "Sometimes you make **choices** in life, and sometimes choices make you."
8. The **blood vessel** broke when she thought of death.
9. Adam brought **Brooke Vega** to the hospital to get into the ICU.
10. Mia realized about Teddy's death when she saw **Willow** at the hospital.

Circle the correct answer (Multiple Choice).

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b. "You still have a family."

- c. "You can go if you want."
- d. "Do what you want."

Short Answer.

26. How does Mia and her family get into a car accident?

It was on a snowy day, when all schools were announced to close down due to the weather. Mia's mother decided not to go to work, and spend her valuable time with her loving family. Then, they decided to go visit Gran and Gramps, and suddenly a truck had lost track of the wheel, and dived into Mia's car.

27. Why does Mia think that her relationship with Adam is not quite working in the beginning?

Mia believes that her relationship with Adam is being ruined because of "politeness." Adam and Mia are trying to be polite to each other, and thus creating a downfall to their relationship since their relationship became awkward because of this.

28. When and how does Mia realize the warmth of Gramps towards her?

The first time that Mia realizes the warmth of Gramps was when she went to Julliard to audition. When they returned from the trip, Gramps gave Mia a big heart, and she realized that this meant "I'm so proud of you and I love you." Gramps wasn't a type of person who expresses his feeling, and thought that Gramps didn't like her a lot. Then, she understood what kind of person he was.

29. Does Mia want to die when she is the ICU? Why or why not?

Mia is actually confused with whether she should live or die. She doesn't know what people want them to do with her life, and everyone advises her to stay alive. But she feels like there is no reason to live since her family had died already.

30. What does Mia think about life and death when she remembers the lyrics her father wrote?

When Mia is in coma, she thinks about the lyrics her father wrote, and questions what her father meant by those lyrics. She thinks that it might mean that he wants her to do what she thinks, but also, to follow her parents to heaven so she can meet them again. The lyrics her father wrote, confuses her even more and questions about death.

Essay Questions.

31. What do you think would have happened if Mia and her family hadn't gone on a trip?

If Mia and her family hadn't gone on the trip to meet Gramps and Gran, then they wouldn't have gotten into a car accident. The car accident was the only reason why this novel was written and has become more interesting. Eventually, without the car accident, Mia wouldn't have understood the true meaning of life and death, and she wouldn't have realized how much she had in her life. She had an amazing boyfriend, a lovely family who loved her a lot, and a best friend who understood her more than she understood herself.

Therefore, if the car accident didn't happen, then Mia wouldn't have learned the lesson that even though she was different from her family and friends, it didn't change the fact that they loved her. Moreover, there wouldn't have been any intriguing message in the novel for the readers to learn because without the car accident, she wouldn't have been able to express everything she saw and felt. Thus, if Mia hadn't gone in the drive with her family, then there wouldn't have been a continuation of the story for the readers to learn about the importance of love in life.

32. How does music tie in with people's lives?

In this novel, music is a very important factor in understanding the minds of the people. The music acts as a signal to indicate what people are feeling, and how they will overcome the situation. For example, at Kerry's funeral, the music played didn't represent his life at all, and characters in the novel believe that music should represent the lives people lived. Also, another example was the surgery scene where the doctors debated on what music to play while doing the surgery. This expressed the chaotic mind and situation of Mia and her family.

Therefore, music represents the mind of Mia in general in this novel. Music is shown as a very important factor in Mia's family's lives, and all of the characters are those who play instruments. They all relate their lives to music, and every single part of the life Mia talks about is about music and how it influenced her and her family. Thus, music is a tool to express the feelings people are experiencing.

33. What do you think the choices that Mia's father made is similar to everyone's lives?

The choices Mia's father made is very similar to the choices we all make in every day life. Mia's father had to make a choice on whether he should quit playing in the band or become an English teacher to support his family financially. This choice was a hard choice he had to make, and it was giving up all he had for his family. Many people around him tried to convince him not to quit, and gave opinions on what he should do, but at the end what really mattered was what he wanted to do.

These are similar to the choices we have to make every day because people experience struggles on what kind of choices they should make. Even us, as students, have to make a choice and sacrifice the time spent with our friends for our college. These choices are hard to make because both are very important to most of us. Many people around try to convince us on what to do, but those opinions are not considerate after all, since the choices we make solely depend on what we want to become later on.

34. How do you explain Mia's sick body and the thought processing about death?

When Mia was unconscious, she wasn't able to move, talk, or do anything she wanted to do. But in one of the scenes, when she thought about death, her body started to act weird and had to go into another surgery. What Mia realized was that when she thought about death or anything that had to do with giving up with her life, her body started to act in an awkward way and experienced death in general.

This relationship is very common in dramas or in movies because when those in coma are losing the strength and motif to live longer, they eventually die soon. However, when there are people around them who support them to live, they actually wake up and explain what they felt like in coma. These situation shows that people depend on what they think, and how they react to the situations. This is the same for people who are not in coma because having a positive mind actually encourages them to survive through hardship. However, when they have a negative cognition, people have a hard time living through the hardship and experience a literal downfall in their lives.

35. Do you think the title should be changed into "If I Leave"? Why or why not?

The original title is "If I Stay," but this is a very controversial title since the main point of the story is deciding on whether to die or not. After Mia and her family had experienced the car accident, Mia was left alone in the hospital with only her friends and her grandparents left behind with her. This was a hard choice for her to make because she didn't know whether she should die or not. However, at the end she leaves everyone behind to join her family in heaven.

In addition, most of the story talks about her past and how it influenced her decision. But most of the time these thoughts makes her conclude that she should die, but those who are still alive tries to convince her to stay in the hospital alive. Thus, the title should be changed to "If I Leave," because what she thinks about is what will happen if she leaves her other friends and family behind. Therefore, the imagination and the flashbacks that are used in the novel is basically thinking about death, and what would happen if she died. The only reason why she

couldn't make the decision to die was simply because she didn't want the ones alive to become miserable due to her.

However, she eventually decides to die, and this only strengthened the reason why the title should be changed in to "If I Leave."